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SUBJECT: JAN. 26-27 HIGH LEVEL FOOD SECURITY MEETING IN
MADRID

Classified By: CDA Arnold A. Chacon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The U.S. delegation to the Spain-hosted January 26-27 High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, led by State/EEB and USAID, achieved its key objective of launching the consultation process for establishing a Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security. Secretary Clinton's video remarks were very well received, providing significant added leverage for the U.S. delegation. The United States had to work hard with the host government to keep the non-negotiated statement from reading like a declaration of national commitments. Future challenges will include ensuring that the consultation process led by the UN High Level Task Force on Food Security is broad enough to include all relevant stakeholders but still efficient enough to produce an effective consensus in the coming months. We will also need to carefully manage FAO Director General Jacques Diouf and the FAO's role in consultation process.
END SUMMARY.

Key Results - Global Partnership Launched,
Secretary's Video a Hit

¶2. (SBU) From the U.S. perspective, the most important outcome of the Madrid meeting is the launch of the consultation process for establishing the GPAFS. The U.S. has worked through the G8 to develop the Partnership, which will bring together key stakeholders - including UN agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governments - to provide a more coordinated and comprehensive response to global food insecurity. Our goal is to launch the partnership formally later this year. COMMENT: The final statement, as drafted by the GOS, states that the consultation process "...should be convened and facilitated by the members of the UN High Level Task Force." This obtuse construction is an obvious result of lobbying on the part of the FAO DG Jacques Diouf, who has made clear that he wants the FAO, which is a member of the Task Force, to participate in the development of the Partnership. The U.S. worked closely with the host government to convince them that a chairman's statement would be a more achievable outcome document than a statement of national commitments.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT CONTINUED: The U.S. received a significant bounce provided by Secretary Clinton's video message to the conference, which was played as the third speech of the opening ceremony and was very well received by the host government, other delegations, and UN and civil society representatives alike. The timely remarks, which emphasized U.S. commitment to food security, doubtlessly helped the U.S. delegation achieve the goal of including the launch of the partnership process as the major deliverable of the conference. END COMMENT.

Opening Remarks Touch on Controversial Issues

¶4. (SBU) UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Director-General Jacques Diouf opened the meeting with an exceptionally long speech outlining the extent of the current food security problem, proposed resources needed to increase production, and the potential negative impacts of declining agricultural commodity prices and the financial crisis on production. Although he endorsed the concept of a new Global Partnership, Diouf made clear his intentions to position the FAO as the leading UN body to run the Partnership by declaring that the FAO has already moved forward in establishing a High-Level Panel of Experts (an item called for by the Partnership) and that the FAO's Committee on Food Security should have a central role in future work of the Panel. Diouf also reiterated his call for President Obama to support a World Food Summit in 2009, and said that he was in the process of circulating a proposal to FAO members.

¶5. (SBU) Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Miguel Angel Moratinos addressed the need for additional resources, stating that Spain had provided \$115 million to the World Food Program in 2008, and had increased its donations to FAO and other UN efforts in 2008 as well. Moratinos pledged that Spain would meet the goal of providing 0.7 percent of its GDP as foreign assistance by 2012, and called for this goal to be compulsory for all developed nations. Spain also announced its desire to establish a new funding mechanism to channel financial resources to food security and agriculture. Moratinos said such a new mechanism would use existing bodies more efficiently and not create new bureaucracy. Although he did not further explain the new mechanism concept, he announced that Spain would provide significant new resources for food security, including 500 million euros over the next five years. In addition, Moratinos called for the "right to food" concept to play a more central role as an organizing principle in addressing food insecurity, thereby ensuring people around the world would have "permanent access to resources for food." COMMENT: Spain included references to the "right to food" in its non-negotiated statement. The United States considers the concept of a "right to food" as aspirational and not as a separate legally enforceable right. END COMMENT.

¶6. (SBU) Not to be outdone, UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Food Olivier de Schutter argued against free trade, which he said leads to disaster for developing countries, flooding them with cheap food in a form of neo-colonialism from the North. He called for the right to food to be the organizing principle for the new Partnership and enforced by international law. Like Spain, he called for a legal obligation for developed countries to provide 0.7 percent of GDP for foreign assistance. Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University said that the problem was simple - small holder farmers in poor countries simply needed money to buy improved seeds and fertilizers, and donor governments should pool all their agriculture assistance into one account managed by the World Bank for this purpose. COMMENT: Poor farmers' NGOs explicitly rejected Sachs' idea later in the session. END COMMENT.

Roundtables and Closing

¶7. (SBU) The conference featured four roundtables. Alternate Head of Delegation Franklin Moore (USAID) served as a panelist on roundtable 4 and focused his remarks on means to increase interaction among public, private, and voluntary sectors to promote food security along the agriculture value chain. Consistent with our policy of promoting an effective international partnership, Moore made clear that the Partnership would have to be inclusive and include farmers, members of civil society, and agro business - including small business - and especially women. Several key conclusions were shared by all four roundtables. These included the need

for urgent action at the country level, both in the short and longer terms, and should include small farmers and women, and that the partnership launched at the conference would require a broad and deep consultation process.

18. (SBU) The conference concluded with closing statements from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Spanish President Rodriguez Zapatero. Ban, in his remarks, supported launching the consultation process to form the Partnership, reiterated Spain's call for a new financial mechanism, and echoed the "right to food" -- based approach to food security. President Rodriguez Zapatero said Spain had called the meeting to return food security to the top of the international agenda and repeated Spain's positions as described by FM Moratinos and other officials calling for a new UN-led financial mechanism. He also called for an international control mechanism to prevent agricultural commodity price speculation, which he blamed for 25 percent of overall food price increases in 2008. He promised that Spain would contribute 1 billion euros over five years to fight hunger - doubling Moratinos' figure of 500 million - and he said fighting hunger would be a priority for Spain's EU presidency in the first half of 2010.

Backstory with David Nabarro

19. (C) In a separate meeting after the conference, David Nabarro (protect) explained that he believed he had a mandate to move the Partnership consultation process forward. Mr. Nabarro gave an account of the drama leading to the final chair's statement and Ban Ki-moon's speech. He explained that as of the end of the first day there was no consensus on moving consultations forward. FAO DG Diouf refused to cooperate, accusing Nabarro of conspiring with the G8 and against the developing world. However, with the arrival of President Rodriguez Zapatero and Ban on the second day, momentum started to shift. Rodriguez Zapatero made clear his displeasure with Diouf, and Nabarro understands that Ban told Diouf in a one-on-one meeting to get in line. Nabarro suspects that part of Ban's motivation lies in needing to show he can control UN agencies as he heads into re-election mode. Rodriguez Zapatero threatened to pull Spain's money if Diouf didn't get into line. By morning's end on the second (and last) day, Diouf had seemingly been outflanked. We will continue to need to work to bring FAO into the consultation fold without allowing Diouf to either derail or entirely control the process.

CHACON